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**U.S. Department of the Interior**

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## Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### Jewel Cave Earns Climate Friendly Park Status

Custer, SD – Jewel Cave National Monument recently earned the National Park Service's Climate Friendly Park (CFP) status. The Monument joined the ranks of only about 70 CFP sites of the 398 park sites across the country. The program measures and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It also educates park staff and visitors about climate change and engages the public with ideas on how to take action. To be a part of this unique program, the Monument completed a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory to calculate the park's baseline emissions from 2008 – 2011. Monument staff also composed an action plan to detail the next steps to reduce those emissions by 2016.

The Earth's climate has changed throughout history. Yet, the current trend is occurring at an unprecedented rate as compared over the last 1200 years. From seashores to mountain glaciers, from historical sites to caves, the impacts of climate change are taking their toll on America's national parks. Glaciers have shrunk, ice on rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier, plant and wildlife ranges have shifted, and some species of trees are flowering sooner. The National Park Service is taking a leading role in the global response.

CFP was initiated at Jewel Cave in order to implement sustainable practices into park operations. Practices ranged from simple actions, such as saving office paper and turning off lights to more complex facility projects like the installation of a water bottle filling station. A water bottle filling station was installed at the visitor center, with a digital counter that tracks the number of plastic bottles it has saved from landfill disposal. Other actions involved upgrades to equipment and facilities, including the transition from gas powered utility carts to electrical models and the replacement of inefficient water heaters with energy efficient models in staff housing. Fluorescent bulbs in the cave elevators were also replaced with LEDs.

Superintendent Larry Johnson organized a Green Team in the fall of 2010, consisting of park staff for the purpose of exploring sustainability ideas. Working across program areas, the team developed an annual work plan that addressed areas of interest. One area of attention is to enhance and improve public education efforts and outreach. Johnson comments, "This effort is about being good stewards of our natural resources. We will work hard to do our part and continue to work with our visitors to help make Jewel Cave a model of sustainability. We owe that to our future generations of park enthusiasts."

The Jewel Cave CFP Action Plan is posted online at [www.nps.gov/jeca](http://www.nps.gov/jeca), within the Management quicklink. Jewel Cave has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 3% from the 2008 baseline level by 2016. Solid waste is planned for a 5% reduction over the next three years, which amounts to a decrease of 1.5 tons of landfill matter. The Monument also plans to conduct at least one sustainability activity each academic year with its Adopt a Classroom partnership with the nearby Custer School District.

Green Team Chair Rene Ohms states, "Jewel Cave is proud to be recognized as a Climate Friendly Park. Through this program, we've made ambitious commitments to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing waste, and educating our staff and public on the importance of environmental stewardship. We look forward to fulfilling these goals and carrying our sustainable practices into the future."

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The new water bottle filling station at Jewel Cave has already saved over 200 bottles from the landfill since January. NPS Photo

*About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 398 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).*

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